

## REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 11-12 are in the application.

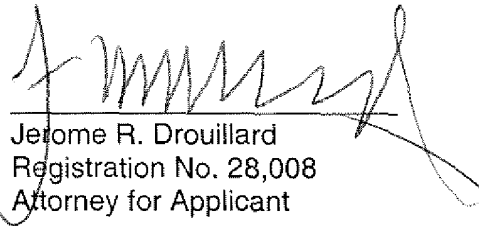
Claims 1-8 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Blake (6,874,806). The Examiner states that Blake discloses a trailer hitch in Fig. 8 with a cover which may be used as a step. Clearly, the structure in Blake's Fig. 8 cannot be used as a cover while a trailer hitch is in place. For this, the Examiner looks to Figs. 5B or 6 of Blake, wherein, it is argued, Blake "teaches a cover (286, figure 6, 188, figure 5B) including a rotatable door or cover plate (156)." The Examiner argues that "[I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the cover plate or the step of Blake in figure 8 with a cover having a rotatable window as taught by Blake in figure 5B in order to access to the trailer hitch with the cover plate or the step in the first position or the second position." Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and requests that each of Claims 1-8 and 11 be reconsidered in view of these remarks and passed to issue over the Examiner's rejection.

The Examiner's reliance on Blake is not well founded. The fact of the matter is that Blake clearly teaches use of a door which is either open or closed. When the door is open a trailer hitch may be inserted. When the door is closed, there is no possible way for a trailer hitch to be inserted into Blake's device. It is not possible to base a sustainable obviousness rejection upon Blake, because the Examiner has adduced no evidence to support his conclusion that it would be obvious to modify Blake's cover plate.

As noted above, the Examiner states that Blake shows a "rotatable window." However, Applicant respectfully submits that Blake teaches absolutely nothing about a rotatable "window" through which a hitch may be inserted. As a result, each of Claims 1-8 and 11 should be passed to issue over the Examiner's rejection. Moreover, Claim 12, which is rejected over Blake in view of Hehr (6,685,204) should also be passed to issue over the Examiner's rejection

because Claim 12 ultimately depends upon Claim 1 which, as noted above, is allowable. In sum, each of the claims in this case is condition for allowance and should be passed to issue over the Examiner's rejection. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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